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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 (Previously presented). An original transport apparatus automatically taking up one or more originals one sheet at a time from a loading tray and transporting said sheet toward a transport path, said apparatus comprising:

a tray for loading said originals, the tray being inclined downward and having a lower tip region;

an outer casing member arranged above said lower tip region ;

a first shaft positioned perpendicular to a direction of sheet transport;

said outer casing member disposed so as to permit opening and closing about said first shaft ;

a stopper member positioned in the lower tip region of the tray against which the originals can abut and align prior to transport;

an engagement piece disposed in the outer casing member on a second shaft positioned perpendicular to the direction of sheet transport so as to permit independent pivotal displacement thereof ;

the stopper member being positioned on a third shaft, which is positioned perpendicular to the direction of sheet transport, so as to permit pivotal displacement thereof, the stopper member causing a lead edge of said sheet to stop at a prescribed location;

said engagement piece being capable of engaging with the stopper member; and

a lifting member supported by the outer casing member and attached to the stopper member to permit the stopper member to move vertically in the outer casing member when abutting a sheet;

the lifting member having an arm member located and pivotally supported at a first end within the outer casing member;

said third shaft located at a second end of the arm member, to which the stopper member is pivotally secured;

wherein, when the outer casing member is closed and the apparatus is in an original takeup standby state, engagement of the stopper member by the engagement piece causes the stopper member to be retained in a position in which the stopper member stops the lead edge of the sheet at the prescribed location, thereby constraining the lead edge at the prescribed location and preventing entry of the sheet into the transport path;

wherein, when the outer casing member is closed and takeup of the sheet is proceeding, the engagement piece is displaced in pivoting fashion, thereby disengaging engagement between the engagement piece and the stopper member, permitting pivoting displacement of the stopper member and allowing transport of the sheet.

2. Cancelled.

3 (Previously presented). An original transport apparatus according to claim 1 wherein:

during the course of closing the outer casing member from an open state, the stopper member which is engaged with the engagement piece abuts and is pressed upward by the sheet in the tray, thereby causing the second end of the arm member to be displaced upward in pivoting fashion about the first end, in accompaniment to which the stopper member moves upward within the outer casing member.

4 (Previously presented). An original transport apparatus according to claim 1 , further comprising a lifting piece integrally connected to the arm member for lifting the engagement piece upward;

wherein, when closing the outer casing member from the open state, the stopper member which is engaged with the engagement piece abuts and is pressed upward by the sheet in the tray, thereby causing the second end of the arm member to be displaced upward in pivoting fashion around the first end, in accompaniment to which the stopper member moves upward, and the lifting piece moves upward so as to further lift upward the engagement piece and thereby disengage engagement between the stopper member and the engagement piece.

5 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 3 or 4 wherein:

~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~ is provided with ~~at least one~~ a guide component causing ~~at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ to be displaced in pivoting fashion such that it is raised upward when ~~at least one of~~ the arm member ~~or members~~ is displaced in pivoting fashion such that it subtends not less than ~~at least one~~ a preestablished angle.

6 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 3 or 4 wherein:

~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~ is provided with ~~at least one~~ a guide component causing ~~at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ to be displaced in pivoting fashion such that it is raised upward when ~~at least one of~~ the arm member ~~or members~~ is displaced in pivoting fashion such that it subtends not less than ~~at least one~~ a preestablished angle;

~~at least one of~~ the guide component ~~or components is at least one~~ comprises a guide surface formed at ~~at least one~~ a top inside wall region of ~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~; and

~~at least one top region of at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ has a top region which, ~~has~~ when moved upward abuts ~~at least one of~~ the guide surface ~~or surfaces~~ and slides therealong so as to cause ~~at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ to be displaced in pivoting fashion such that it is raised upward.

7 (Previously presented). An original transport apparatus automatically taking up one or more originals one sheet at a time from a loading tray and transporting said sheet toward a transport path, said apparatus comprising:

a tray for loading said originals, the tray being inclined downward and having a lower tip region;

an outer casing member arranged above said lower tip region;

a first shaft positioned perpendicular to a direction of sheet transport;

said outer casing member disposed so as to permit opening and closing about said first shaft ;

a stopper member positioned in the lower tip region of the tray against which the originals can abut and align prior to transport;

an engagement piece disposed in the outer casing member on a second shaft positioned perpendicular to the direction of sheet transport so as to permit independent pivotal displacement thereof ;

the stopper member being positioned on a third shaft, which is positioned perpendicular to the direction of sheet transport, so as to permit pivotal displacement thereof, the stopper member causing a lead edge of said sheet to stop at a prescribed location;

the engagement piece being capable of engaging with the stopper member;

a pickup arm disposed in the outer casing member so as to permit displacement in pivoting fashion about an axis located in a direction perpendicular to the sheet transport direction;

said pickup arm having two ends, a pickup roller for taking up said sheet from the tray being positioned at one end and a thrust member at the other end for engaging the engagement piece; and

a lifting member supported by the outer casing member and attached to the stopper member to permit the stopper member to move vertically in the outer casing member when abutting a sheet;

the lifting member having an arm member located and pivotally supported at a first end within the outer casing member;

said third shaft located at a second end of the arm member, to which the stopper member is pivotally secured;

wherein, when the outer casing member is closed and the apparatus is in an original takeup standby state, the fact that the pickup roller is positioned in an upper region within the outer casing member, thereby preventing engagement of the thrust member with the engagement piece, causes engagement to be retained between the stopper member and the engagement piece, constraining a location of the lead edge of said sheet and preventing entry of said sheet into the transport path; and

wherein, when the outer casing member is closed and takeup of said sheet is proceeding, the pickup arm is displaced downward to cause the pickup roller to move downward and away from the outer casing member so as to not be hidden thereby, and

linked with the downward displacement of the pickup arm causing engagement of the thrust member with the engagement piece, the engagement piece is displaced in pivoting fashion, thereby disengaging engagement between the engagement piece and the stopper member, permitting pivoting displacement of the stopper member and allowing transport of said sheet.

8 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 7 wherein ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ has:

~~one or more~~ a first standby position~~positions~~, at which ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ and ~~at least one of~~ the engagement piece ~~or pieces~~ are not engaged, but at which ~~at least one of~~ the engagement piece ~~or pieces~~ and ~~at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ are engaged; and

~~one or more~~ a second standby position~~positions~~, between ~~at least one of~~ the first standby position ~~or positions~~ and ~~at least one of the~~ a position ~~or positions~~ occupied when takeup of ~~at least one of the~~ an original ~~or originals~~ is proceeding and ~~at least one of~~ the pickup roller ~~or rollers~~ has moved downward and away from ~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~ so as to not be hidden thereby, at which ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ and ~~at least one of~~ the engagement piece ~~or pieces~~ are engaged, but at which ~~at least one of~~ the engagement piece ~~or pieces~~ and ~~at least one of~~ the stopper member ~~or members~~ are disengaged;

~~one or more~~ a retaining member ~~members~~ being provided at ~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~; and

~~at least one of~~ the retaining member ~~or members~~ retaining ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ when ~~at least one of~~ the second standby position ~~or positions~~ is occupied.

9 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 8 ~~wherein:~~

~~at least one of~~ the retaining member ~~or members~~ comprises ~~at least one~~ an elastically deformable plate spring provided at ~~at least one~~ an inside wall of ~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member ~~or members~~;

the pickup arm having a pivot tip region;

the ~~at least one~~ retaining member abutting ~~at least one~~ the pivot tip region of ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~, retaining the ~~at least one~~ pickup arm, when the ~~at least one~~ pickup arm is displaced in pivoting fashion at least as far as ~~at least one of~~ the second standby position ~~or positions~~.

10 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 8 wherein:

~~at least one of~~ the retaining member ~~or members~~ comprises ~~at least one~~ a pivot projection provided at ~~at least one~~ a basal side, about which pivoting occurs~~,~~ of ~~at least one of~~ the pickup roller ~~or rollers~~, and ~~at least one~~ a pivot constraining rod ~~provided at at least one apparatus main body and~~ constraining pivoting of ~~at least one of~~ the pivot projection ~~or projections~~;

~~at least one of~~ the pivot projection ~~or projections~~ abutting ~~at least one of~~ the pivot constraining rod ~~or rods~~, retaining the ~~at least one~~ pickup arm~~,~~ when the ~~at least one~~ pickup arm is displaced in pivoting fashion at least as far as ~~at least one of~~ the second standby position ~~or positions~~.

11 (Currently amended). An original transport apparatus according to claim 8 further comprising:

~~one or more~~ a drive control means driving ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ so as to displace it in pivoting fashion;

~~at least one of~~ the drive control means for driving ~~at least one of~~ the pickup arm ~~or arms~~ so as to cause it to be displaced in pivoting fashion from ~~at least one of~~ the first standby position ~~or positions~~ to ~~at least one of~~ the second standby position ~~or positions~~ when ~~at least one of~~ the outer casing member~~,~~ ~~or members~~ which had at least immediately prior thereto been in ~~at least one~~ a closed state~~,~~ is opened.